



TCPS

TÜRKİYE HAPİSHANE ÇALIŞMALARI MERKEZİ
TURKEY'S CENTER FOR PRISON STUDIES

Research Ethics Manual TCPS

First draft



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Research Ethics Manual TCPS

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1. TCPS Research Guide - Introduction

At present, the Turkish prison system is understudied from an academic point of view. To this end, we implement Turkey's Center for Prison Studies (TCPS) in order to foster research on Turkish prisons within Turkey and abroad and to systematically produce and share knowledge about the prisons in Turkey

The purpose of TCPS is to obtain accurate and impartial information about the Turkish penal system. The newly gained knowledge is to be made available for the public, policy makers and practitioners on a national and international level.

The establishment of the centre aims to create connections between CSOs and researchers, working at universities or independently to establish the Turkish penal system as an academic field in universities. Furthermore, it aims at establishing international connections to similar international centres.

To ensure quality of the research conducted within the centre and to complement the training on research ethics and standards, this online manual has been prepared for researchers as a guideline and for interest groups to learn more about our principles and research integrity

TCPS wants to:

- establish the Turkish penal system as an academic field;
- conduct research according to common ethics and standards;
- get university students interested in topics surrounding the Turkish penal system;
- make research available to the wider public, online and through the conferences ;
- ensure the high quality of the reports and publications of the network;
- create links between universities and the civil society;
- contribute to the dialogue about reform through addressing existing research gaps;
- contribution to current literature, academic research and media on prisons in Turkey;
- involve universities in the shaping of national and local policies regarding human rights in prisons.

2. Research Ethics within TCPS

2. 1. The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

TCPS research shall be conducted according to international research standards. As a guideline we recommend for all members to use the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. The code is a joint work by The European Science Foundation (ESF) and ALLEA (All European Academies). It addresses the principles of research, misconduct, ethics, methods and international collaboration. Before you start conducting your research, please read the code fully and contact members of TCPS in case there are any ambiguities.

The full Code can be downloaded from the ESF website at:

http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf

Further information can be found on the Science Europe Roadmap website, provided by Science Europe. Here you can find additional information concerning conducting research; accessing research data; research integrity or research policy:

<http://www.scienceeurope.org/policy/policy-2/roadmap>

2.2 TCPS Ethics Committee

All TCPS studies are submitted for review to the TCPS Ethics Committee. TCPS is responsible for the quality, validity and integrity of the research conducted within or in collaboration with the center. To this end, TCPS peer-reviews every work submitted and conducted as well as investigating any research misconduct brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee within the work of TCPS.

Research misconduct includes (not restrictively) plagiarism, falsification of results, and the negligence of research ethics and conduct.

Members of the Ethics Committee:

- Mustafa Eren
- Aysegül Algan
- Eva Tanz

In case cases do not find an internal agreement, TCPS establishes an external Ethics Committee.

Members:

XXXX

3. Practical Issues Concerning Research within TCPS

3.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

TCPS aims at studying the Turkish penal system, with a special focus of issues surrounding prisoners and imprisonment. To this end researches will most likely use mixed methods, such as secondary literature, quantitative and qualitative studies¹.

Conducting ethnographic research and trying to overcome its limitations will be one of the main efforts of TCPS. In the following more detail will be given about qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.1.1 Quantitative Research Methods

Talking about crime and punishment, the use of crime and imprisonment data and crime and imprisonment trends are an important factor. Regarding numbers about prison population, is important to keep in mind that the incarceration rate is not a measure of criminality and it is very difficult to compare penal statistics between different countries². Numbers themselves do not explain the actual implication of how it actually came to this account. A number does not state that a person from the lowest segment of society is much more likely to be observed, arrested and convicted for any violation of the law than its upper class counterpart³. Another example is the imprisonment of foreigners. Statistics are frequently used to foster the idea of the "criminal foreigner", which can lead to discrimination. The problem researchers face is, not only in Turkey, but also in Europe, the data given by the justice system does not offer specific data on ethnic immigrants or sub-groups of the inmates⁴. For example, it is important to be aware of the differences between a "national", "foreigners" or "migrant" and how these are to be found in the statistics. As other have argued before, the numbers are misleading and show a much more overrepresented picture of a connection between race and crime, as it is not understood that there has to be a distinction between a foreigner and a national and the possible crimes committed⁵. Furthermore, crimes against immigration law can only be committed by immigrants and are thus "structural discrimination in the criminal justice system [....]"⁶.

¹ A good read concerning research methods is: Gadd, D.; Karstedt, S. & Messner, S. (2012). *The SAGE Handbook of Criminological Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications

² Melossi, 2003, p. 378

³ Chambliss, 1969, p. 86, in: *Key Readings in Criminology*

⁴ Albrecht, 2000, p. 133

⁵ Tournier, 1997, p. 549

⁶ Melossi, 2003, p. 373; Dünkel, 2004. p. 7, Tournier, 1997, p. 540, De Georgi, 2010

Statistical data is a good starting point for your research and hypothesis but it is important to keep in mind the different variables that can explain for example rising imprisonment numbers.

In the following some notes from the TCPS Research Ethics Seminar will be given, which were kindly presented by Yildirim Sentürk:

- State/Institutions: using statistics which are provided by the state, it is important to consider how these have been obtained and how they are used. How are decisions taken to include which group/person etc.
- It is important to find out how the prison authorities work in order to use statistics correctly.

3.1.2 Qualitative Research Methods

One method of conducting qualitative data collection in prisons is ethnographic research. Ethnographic research entails observation and qualitative interviews, through which "rich and detailed accounts of people and the societal processes they are embedded in [...]" are produced⁷. Ethnography focuses to study and understand the perspective of the participants in their everyday life⁸.

One form of ethnographic research is "life history" interviews. Conducting interviews with inmates or former prisoners which enables them to give details about their development, surrounding and their own insights which enables the researcher to connect the details given into the wider societal, economical and political changes⁹. Researchers criticize the lack of ethnographic studies, due to limitations regarding access into closed institutions (Wacquant, 2002).

⁷ For a discussion on ethnographic research methods and qualitative research see: The Special Issue on Prison Ethnography by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (2013). *Criminal Justice Matters*, 91:1

⁸ Drake & Earle (2013) On the inside: prison ethnography around the globe. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 91:1, p. 12

⁹ Crewe, B. (2013). Writing and Reading a Prison: Making Use of Prisoner Life Stories. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 91:1, 20-20; Riessman, C. K. (2004). Narrative analysis. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. E. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *The Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 705–709). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

3.2 Applying To Do Research In Prisons

Things to keep in mind when applying to do research in prisons¹⁰:

- You have to apply to the Ministry of Justice (T.C. Adalet Bakanlığı Ceza ve Tevkif Evleri Genel Müdürlüğü'ne)
- Apply as soon as possible to give time for the decision making;
- In your application, write something about what you want to do, why this is good for the MoJ and provide some ground why they should give permission;
- Set demands: that you want to see prisoners in ...; places, to be there at;
- Also set a date to get information from the prison administration, too;
- Mention your source/ support, e.g. European Union grant;
- Mention other EU or state funded projects you did before;
- Talk about your institutions previous cooperation with the MoJ;

Keep in mind:

- You ask permission from the general directorate of penitentiaries and then you go to a specific prison - Anything that you did not mention in your written application will be an issue when you get to the prison, e.e, if you did not ask permission to see places when the prisoners are there, they cannot let you see prisoners, even if they want to.
- Furthermore, give the administrators some alternatives: ask for cells, common places, ateliers, etc., to see. In case entering one is difficult, they can take you to a different option.
- The places and prisoners you want to see have to be in line with your research topic;
- The letter you send has to have an address, fax and telephone number.

3.3 Doing Research In Prisons

¹⁰ Special thanks to Danende Zeynep Alpar and Zafer Kirac for her kind contribution

Conducting research in prisons is not an easy endeavour. In the following some notes from the TCPS Research Ethics Seminar will be given, which were kindly presented by Ipek Mercil and Secil Doguc¹¹:

- Problem of access into prisons: It is very difficult to get permission from the Ministry to conduct work in prisons. In case permission is granted, it is restricted. For example: It is not allowed to meet with prisoners who are convicted under the Anti-Terrorism Act. It is in particular difficult to be able to work with political or LGBTI inmates.
- The Ministry has no protocol about the topics or conditions research can be conducted about.
- Quantitative interviews: Face-to-face interviews are not allowed. In some cases questionnaires can be used.
- Issues with the ethics contract: When applying to the Ministry for permits, an ethical contract is to be signed by the relevant Ministry. The contract contains the clause that "Research information will not be shared with third parties.". The Ministry does not allow press conferences and does not allow for the research to be printed or shared. It is difficult to evaluate the research after it has been delivered to the Ministry. The ethics contract should not be signed.
- The ethical contract only protects the prison administration, but not the rights of inmates.
- There are also inter-ministerial coordination problems. For example, a study about women can be stopped by the Ministry of justice, if it does not grant access, even though the Ministry of Family and Social Policies is one of the participants in this study.
- It is also very difficult to ask the Ministry for help in case of any problems, as conducting research might be seen as not beneficial or unnecessary work.
- Hierarchy in the prisons: Prisons have a hierarchical system, although prison officials cannot prevent the entry within their discretion, they can for example say that the prisoner is not willing to participate.
- Case selection: The prison administration decides who will be interviewed. It is not possible to obtain this information beforehand, Thus, a research sample cannot be created beforehand.
- Letters explaining the study cannot be distributed to the prisoners and prison officers.

¹¹ Many thanks for the kind contribution of Basak Ekinci

- Voice recording: It is not permitted to use a voice recorder in prisons.
- Using questionnaires: Questionnaires are supposed to be in a simple language and might also be explained to the participants verbally. In case the distribution of the questionnaires is left to the prisoners, they might end up being filled out by selected prisoners or prison officers themselves. Survey methods are usually too restrictive and not sufficient enough to enter the prisoner's life story.
- During the interview: If, during the interview a prison officer is present, it might lead to the inability of the interviewee to feel comfortable to talk. You should ensure that at least during the time of the interview the prison officer is not present.
- Prison "acceptance": The researcher should be patient and abide to the prison rules. For the researcher to gain trust of the prison officials takes at least up to 2-3 months.
- Distance to the interviewees: During the research the researcher must keep his distance to the interviewee, as for example questions such as "Can you call my family" can come up. Responding to this simple human desire could be attributed to the outside investigation of the study.
- Researcher profile: The distance between the "intellectual" researcher and the prison officer needs to be reduced. Instead of saying you are a researcher, it might be more useful to draw upon a student profile.
- Women researcher: Prisons are a macho and sexist environment. Precautions can be taken by wearing a wedding ring on the left hand.
- The result of the research should not be the increase of stigma for those imprisoned.

4. TCPS and its Researchers

4.1 Mental Health and Research - Doing Research in and About Prisons

Conducting research in prisons one factor that often is overlooked are the affects it has on the researcher herself/himself. In the following some notes from the TCPS Research Ethics Seminar will be given, which were kindly presented by Cansu Alözkan¹²:

- Human rights, are in itself, a stressful work area.
- Not every traumatic event does cause trauma in people. Nevertheless, even if we constantly listen to traumatized people and their traumatic stories, we are creating a stress for ourselves, too.
- When the stress is too high, burnout and secondary trauma can occur.
- It is important to know what the stress is and to be able to deal with it. In order to do so, we firstly have to understand ourselves and know how we think and how our body reacts.

Burnout syndrome:

Symptoms:

- The work loses its meaning and is not enjoyed as before (work late, falling asleep)
- Severe fatigue exhaustion
- Inability to feel competent in the workplace

Why does it occur:

- The place where we work does not match with our own ideas and ideas
- The administrative or social system does not support us
- Role confusion (such as budget, research, etc.)
- The impact of the work we do when we see it directly
- Inequality and disrespect in the workplace
- Being exposed to traumatic material on a regular basis

Secondary Trauma

¹² Many thanks to the kind contribution of Basak Ekinci

Symptoms:

- The described trauma starts to feel like it is your own
- Frequent nightmares
- Failure to remove the story from the mind, constantly thinking about it
- Stress from the "material" (e.g. before opening a letter)
- Bonding with one person who suffered from trauma in particular
- Tension, unhappiness
- Inability to control emotions

What to do?

- Acknowledge the seriousness of the problem
- Identify for yourself, which cases increase your stress, which circumstances
- It is important to express the feelings (write, sing, cry, but most importantly share), otherwise meaningless anger and headache increases
- Important to be rational in keeping goals and to keep them
- Limit the workload, it is important to have frequent breaks. You need to renew your body and soul.
- Take time to do what makes you happy.
- Pay attention to your health
- In moments you feel tired, create opportunities to rest and to refresh yourself.
- After hard days, do something you love, or meet or call a person you like spending time with.
- It is important to come together with the team and share on a frequent basis what was the most difficult and the nicest thing in the past week/s.